Behind the Stars: The Dark Side of India’s Booming Astro-Tech Industry

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Disclaimer: *This report is based on publicly available consumer grievances, forum discussions, and independent market research.*

The promise is alluring: clarity on your career, your marriage, and your future, all just a click away. India’s digital astrology market has exploded into a ₹60,000 crore behemoth. But behind the glossy app interfaces and millions of followers lies a growing trail of disillusioned consumers, empty bank accounts, and allegations of systemic fraud.

The "Bait and Switch"

When users log onto premium astrology platforms, they are often drawn in by the aura of a famous founder or a "master" astrologer. Take, for example, the platform Lunar Astro, founded by Deepanshu Giri. While the platform boasts a dedicated following for its courses, a deep dive into consumer forums like MouthShut and Trustpilot reveals a starkly different reality for consultation clients.

Dozens of users allege a classic "bait and switch." Consumers report paying exorbitant fees—upwards of ₹8,000 for a mere 15 minutes—expecting top-tier expertise. Instead, they claim they are handed off to anonymous junior astrologers, known only by codes like "5007" or "5009."

"I would have given Rs. 3k for such a reading, 8k felt like a fraud," wrote one Trustpilot reviewer. "The astrologer joins late but does not even apologize... so discouraging, inaccurate, inexperienced & unprofessional."

Weaponizing Anxiety

The most concerning allegations involve the psychological toll on consumers. People turn to astrology during their most vulnerable moments—job losses, divorces, or health crises. Investigative research indicates that some practitioners exploit this desperation.

Consumers have reported that consultations frequently pivot to fear-mongering. By diagnosing severe "doshas" or negative past-life karma, astrologers allegedly induce panic, only to offer the cure: expensive rituals or further premium consultations. One user noted that the interpretation of their chart was so overwhelmingly negative and disturbing that it left them psychologically distressed for days.

The Illusion of Consensus

How do these platforms maintain their pristine image? The answer may lie in digital manipulation. Industry watchdogs warn that the astro-tech space is rife with purchased followers and fabricated five-star reviews designed to bury genuine complaints. When disgruntled users attempt to seek refunds or complain to customer service, they are often met with silence, or worse, hostility.

A Call for Accountability

While astrology remains a deeply personal matter of faith for millions of Indians, the corporate exploitation of that faith demands scrutiny. As the astro-tech industry continues to scale, the line between spiritual guidance and predatory commerce is blurring. It is time for consumer protection agencies to look behind the stars and hold these digital empires accountable.